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COLLEGIATE EDUCATION.

AN ADDRESS

BEFORE

THE ALUMNI

OF

DARTMOUTH COLLEGE,

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BY

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MDCCLXXI.

Hæc studia adolescentiam agunt, senectutem oblectant, secundas res ornant, adversis profugum atque solatium præbent : delectant domi, non impediunt foris, pernoctant nobiscum, peregrinantur, rusticantur.—*Cicero.*

COLLEGIATE EDUCATION.

I ACCEPTED the invitation to address the Alumni of Dartmouth with an unusual distrust of myself. The occasion is not an ordinary one. I had not to appear before a literary or scientific association of any sort. I could not properly claim your attention with a political subject. Various questions which divide society should, as I thought, find no place before you to-day. I was to speak to a body of educated men—men of all ages and professions and of varied fortunes. The younger graduates would be here, in the freshness of early manhood, with its eagerness, its hope, its ready, facile acquirement. I should meet the earlier Alumni; men, not of different stuff, but of tried stuff; plenary men, I may call them; in the flush of their powers, in the height of their activity; men begrimed with the dust of politics or immersed in the busy work of professional life; learned men, travelled men, historians, scientific explorers, critics, philosophers of many schools; all active, practical, earnest; who keep the world moving —fast; I do not say too fast; who even now are ready to exclaim: “Proceed with what you have to tell us, that we may pass to something else.” And the veterans—men who *have* experienced; who, in many a well-

contested field, have fought their fight—lost or won, it matters not—shattered or stanch, who proclaim:—

“Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off.”

I repeat, I accepted an invitation to address such a body with a great distrust of myself.

A welcome reflection came opportunely. It was that with every one of you, without exception, there existed in common with me one long recollection, compassing a perfectly rounded life, at a period when life in its significance to the future might be said almost to begin. Here on this spot we all achieved in common a single purpose, and from here we started to work out what we have since become. “We are brothers,” so I said to myself, “assembling at our own Dartmouth, where the benches are still hard and the teaching critical, and the climate mainly in keeping; where the old College Hall yet stands monarch, and the Connecticut takes, as of yore, its picturesque winding course.” We meet here.

So I resolved to discourse to you out of my heart, with a confidence that, if I really did so, I should strike responsive chords in yours. I thought to-day we would take a brief survey of our College, and, looking over past and present, attempt to come to an understanding for the future.

I say “we,” for it seems to me the Alumni are, or ought to be, the active elements of the institution; in fact, its component parts, as the inhabitants of a country are of the nation. We are not, it is true, subjected to the labor and responsibility of governing, but it leaves us the more time to serve it in other ways.

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BOOKSTACKS

In the increased attention paid to the general subject of education, the value of what is termed a classical course has been sharply called in question by a class who view everything from the point of direct and immediate utility. These fail to see any instant advantage in a college career. They say it is "four years wasted," and demand, with a sneer, "What's the use?"

The question, "What is the use," is a great question, if applied with a noble meaning—not to the immediate present only, but to the far-off ultimate. If demanded in the latter sense, it is grand; if in the first merely, it is petty and contemptible. And it is in this first sense that those who claim to criticise us put the interrogatory. I have myself been asked by some such, distinguished in their way, public men, too, if I thought there was any real value in a diploma: as if the whole subject turned on the question.

The fact is, the opponents of classical education do not appear to have any just conception of what its advantages consist. They state the case something in this way: "The studies have no immediate practical application to the future occupation of the student." This is what we ourselves claim: "The comparatively trifling amount of Latin and Greek acquired in college is nearly all forgotten soon after leaving it by nine-tenths of the young men." This, we are inclined to think, is pretty near the truth. "Other studies might be selected which would serve better than Latin and Greek to discipline the mind." We do not deny it. Here is the whole argument, and chiefly we admit the premises. What then? We repeat, those who urge it have no adequate conception of the subject. In their

attacks they not only shoot wide of the mark, but in another direction.

The value of the study of the classics is that it brings the mind while young face to face with the philosophy and poetry and traditions of antiquity, connecting it with the Past, which is everlastingly linked with the Present, in a continuity so subtle yet so unbroken. With the little he may learn of the languages themselves, the student is introduced to the sources of all our learning, our arts, and our philosophy. And whether he gains in the actual study much or little, his mind has received its baptism, and is impregnated with what will cling to it forever.

This is the value of a college course. For this reason the term "*humanities*" is applied to it. This is why we pronounce the graduate "*liberally educated*." Not from the number of studies he has undertaken or the amount of knowledge he has acquired, but because for four years study is pursued for its own sake, without thought of its immediate utility, which, by its expansive influence, lays the foundation for an enlarged life in the future.

There is a rare link which binds together men of classical reminiscences :—

“And I, too, was in Arcadia born,”
is a declaration which thrills the heart. We welcome whoever makes it as one who has drunk from the same fountain, and who carries about with him the same imperishable elixir. These associations become a part of our daily life ; they preserve us from what is commonplace, and help to keep alive the qualities our of youth.

Such is the testimony of every scholar. Montesquieu,

commencing the study of the Greek authors, could not restrain his delight. "I am enchanted," he cries, "and ready to exclaim with Pliny, 'It is to Athens you are going; respect the gods.'"

When Mr. Webster, at the close of his argument in the case of Dartmouth College, before the Supreme Court of the United States, said to the Chief Justice: "It is, sir, as I have said, a small college. And yet there are those who love it;" what made the eyes of John Marshall fill with tears, his pale cheeks suffuse, and his tall, gaunt form bend unconsciously toward the speaker? Was it occasioned by the simple eloquence of the orator, coupled with his strong exhibition of feeling? Not that of itself. The Chief Justice had listened, during the whole of his judicial life, to the most eloquent advocates of the land, unmoved, emotionless. But here a sympathetic chord was struck. While Webster dwelt in imagination on his own career in that "humble institution," for humble it was then, and so he termed it, Marshall, no doubt, recalled *his* early life, when with youthful zeal he pursued classical studies among the mountains of Virginia, sometimes with, sometimes without a teacher. They had sat around the sacred fires—those two men—and when, having finished his argument, one allowed his heart to overflow, the other caught the afflatus, and the dry question of constitutional law was for the moment lost sight of.

Brothers of Dartmouth, I could not refrain, in passing, from paying my tribute to our classical course. It is founded in wisdom, and I trust no device of the enemy will ever avail to modify or impair it. The

college proper should stand in this respect without change, while around it and under its fostering supervision I would have numerous branches flourish. We have long had a prosperous medical school. I hope speedily a law school will be constituted on a permanent basis, and a theological school as well. The Chandler Scientific Department is in a flourishing condition. In connection with it we should have a school of mines, and instruction in the higher mechanical occupations. An impetus will now be given to an essential art by the wise foresight of General Thayer, who has contributed a large sum to establish a course of instruction in the highest department of civil engineering. I look for excellent results from still another quarter. I refer to the location here of the College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts. It has come to be well understood that agriculture is a science, and that the man who undertakes it requires a special education. In Mechanics we already appreciate the necessity of the best instruction. In connection with this new college let us have well-supported departments in Botany, Chemistry, and Zoology. Let Engraving be taught, and the finer working in metals and ornamental designs. I would like especially to see founded a school of high Art, so well endowed that it would command for lecturers and professors the best talent in the country. In short, I welcome all schools and seminaries and foundations formed to teach whatever is truly useful, so that DARTMOUTH shall become, in the universal sense, a UNIVERSITY, where a young man may find instruction in every known department of education ; while separate and distinct stands the *College*,

her method exact and unyielding, softened by no elective right of the pupil, but carrying resolutely on her banner, "*Disce aut discede.*"

Thus far I have attempted to vindicate our classical course. I come now to examine the teachings of the college outside that course. Are they adequate to the wants of the student?

Two elements were formerly lacking in our instruction; not only in Dartmouth, but in all our colleges. Scarcely any importance was formerly attached to the subject of physical education. The doctrine of "*mens sana in corpore sano*" was ignored. This has been remedied. Opinion has changed. No college is now considered complete in its appointments without a gymnasium; and Dartmouth, thanks to Mr. Bissell, has one of the best. Billiards are no longer interdicted; and bowling alleys, once pronounced against by the legislature, find a welcome place here. Indeed, so thoroughly has the matter been reformed, that professional men pay respect to the principle, while among some of the clergy it has been carried so far that it has given currency to a new expression—"muscular Christianity." There is no need, therefore, that I say one word on this point, except to congratulate the College on the important changes a few years have wrought.

But the other element? It is from the extreme opposite, and is still unsupplied. In respect to it, we are far behind the teachings of Plato in the grove of Academus. I refer to the education of the understanding—the *me*—our proper self. While we cultivate the mind and foster the taste, and look after physical improvement, there is no distinct provision for this.

I hope I may make myself understood. There is difficulty in it, from the confusion of terms in the ordinary use of the words mind, soul, understanding, reason, will, intellect, conscience, spirit, and their derivatives. I would avoid the nomenclature of the schools, yet in doing so I know I shall fail in precision and subject myself to the reproach of the critical.

Above all the claims of the intellect, transcending all its yearnings for knowledge, even of good and evil; apart from all agitation of ethics, towers a want. It is the requirement of the *Ego*, demanding instruction for the inner life, not with reference to this or that faculty, but to the whole circumference of its being.

With child, youth, man, the life of the *me* is all there is of *him* as an identity. Whatever he achieves outside of himself; whether he become a famous lawyer, physician, priest; a subtle philosopher, an engineer of repute, a distinguished soldier or sailor, a cunning inventor, a politician, statesman, or political economist; whether engaged in mechanical pursuits or in affairs; within all this busy paraphernalia of labor, shut carefully in its own casing, utterly disconnected with its own machine work, is *Egomet*. It is what over everything else requires educating, and over everything else it is neglected. For the industry of the College is mainly directed to the improvement of the brain, while the *me*, whose engine the brain is, is left to itself. Does not this strike you as a dangerous procedure? During his course the student is individualized by his class standing; beyond it, he is as little known as the prisoner who exists only as "Number 100."

Let it be understood I am not now speaking of the ne-

cessity of religious teaching, which is something distinct ; not secondary to, but dependent on the proper education of the *me*. The dogmas of a definite creed belong to theology, and lie apart from the philosophy of life, which is concerned with faith in general and its relation to knowledge. This philosophy, which comprehends the education to which I refer, prepares the mind for the religious element, without which preparation religion, so called, is apt to degenerate into something mechanical, or into hypocrisy.

The neglect of this education brings daily its lamentable results. Our active men become materialists. In the turmoil of this world's arena, the doctrine that the universe is self-existent and self-directed falls complacently on the sense. True, there comes a time to material man, when his occupation no longer serves ; when he casts about for a something higher, and finds there is nothing left to look up to, to cling to, to hope from. But the evil is wrought—the wounds on society inflicted—his career ended.

The present demoralization in almost every department of administration, the unscrupulous conduct of officials everywhere, the prostitution of justice itself, can, in my judgment, be traced to the growing belief in the philosophy called "materialism."

I trust I may not appear as arrogating too much, when I recommend, to help to stay this evil, the introduction of a new element of education into our College proper. I would erect a professorship of Humanity, and fill it with men carefully selected, men truly educated, of heart and feeling, who would know how to appeal to human nature as a whole from a wide com-

prehension of it ; who would endeavor to instruct in that philosophy which exalts life ; who would labor to educate the *me* ; who would exhibit a particular sympathy in doing it ; who would in fact undertake to find out exactly of what stuff each young man is made ; probing kindly his interior existence ; helping him to cultivate—despite its faults and errors—a healthy humanity ; directing him always to a higher endeavor, the improvement of the understanding, by which we are cognizant of the Divine ; who would teach him that to the *me* belongs a kingdom ; an inner world ; which, if it fall under the control of an alien power, deprives the proper self of all effectual living force, and makes it incapable of Faith, barren of Love.

A young man enters college, his mind stimulated to seek knowledge, to acquire whatever is possible. He has views and purposes in this connection. Apart from these is the something else which I have attempted to describe, and which should specially have attention. If at this juncture it could receive its proper direction and culture, he would leave at the end of his course possessed of faith in what is and in what is to be. He would not stand, “*dubitans, circumspectans, hesitans, tanquam in mari immenso vecturus; multa, adversa, secunda, revolvens* ; but he would find a living repose in the present, because satisfied with regard to the ultimate perfect and absolute rest of the human spirit.

Let me say here, I do not belong to the class who fear or deplore the astounding triumphs of science. I rejoice in the giant strides we are making in physical advancement, which bring the four corners of the globe together, and render easy in intercommunication,

in mechanics, and in useful arts, what a short time ago was thought impossible. But I would keep the keeper; I would guard the man—the *ego*—from worshipping the idol he himself erects; I would strive to preserve alive the living principle in the master and director of this blind, inscrutable, remorseless material force; repeating to him always, “Man is higher than nature, but nature is intelligible only to the spiritual man.”

Thus, briefly, have I expressed my convictions of the need of a new department in our educational course. I am aware how, so far as is possible, the President attempts to remedy the want. But neither he nor the professors have opportunity, from the duties which crowd on them, to do much else than make the effort.

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I have said the Alumni are or ought to be the active elements of the institution. I mean something practical by this. With real affection in our hearts for Alma Mater, we have, I think, cherished it as a sentiment rather than as an active principle. Can we not undertake to correct this? I am led to these observations by examining my own feelings in this regard, and looking at my own shortcomings. We have different ties, we do not all profess the same creed, nor entertain the same political opinions. Our social relations vary indefinitely. But we can all concentrate on our College. We can each and every one of us do Dartmouth some good. We have only to think seriously of it. Let every one do what he would, so far as he is able. Let those who possess the means found a scholarship, and those who have more, a professorship. They who have less can contribute to the libraries or the cabinets.

If you have a single volume of value to spare, send it ; if you have a thousand, send them. In short, let us maintain here a moral and intellectual savings-bank, in which every one of us shall make a deposit as often and of as much as he can. Failing the ability to contribute, speech is still left to us with which to advocate the interests of Dartmouth.

To bring my suggestions into practice, I do not recommend any meeting of the graduates, with the appointment of committees, corresponding secretaries, and so forth. It would only divide and dilute responsibility, and weaken individual interest, which should be cultivated as something personal. If we will really undertake this, much good will come of it to ourselves and to the College. Man gains infinitely by cherishing a permanent object which is worthy, and the higher the object, the more it elevates to cultivate it. For each of us to feel that this is our institution ; that it is under our protection ; that a certain portion of ourselves serves to make a portion of it, and that something we have done is permanently incorporated with it, will prove a joy and a power to us forever.

In its origin, Dartmouth College was unlike any other institution of learning in our country. Its motto —“*Vox clamantis in Deserto*”—accurately portrayed its character. It was not founded to educate the opulent from far-off towns and cities, but was intended to bring instruction within the reach of those who resided in the region. The hard-working and industrious availed themselves of it for their children, and large numbers of young men struggled through on their own

account. The students were made up of those who literally thirsted for knowledge. They fought their way against poverty and various hardships, and they left the College prepared to cope with whatever they should encounter in the world. And it is an unquestionable fact that, for the number of its graduates, our College has produced more distinguished men than any other in America. If any one doubt it, we have only to say—*Circumspice*. The reason of this is shown in what I have stated.

I am aware that just this state of things cannot continue. I do not claim that it is desirable it should continue literally. Our surroundings have changed. Increasing wealth everywhere has had its modifying influences. But I devoutly hope the College will maintain its character for the robust, sinewy, elastic quality of its students. I confess I never wish to see it frequented by young men of too easy fortunes, who go to a University simply that they may claim the honor of a degree.

While we invoke the aid of money to increase our means of instruction, may Dartmouth never cease to be “the poor man’s college,” with respect to the moderate cost of an education, and also to its long tradition, that no accident of birth or fortune shall have the slightest influence or possess here a solitary advantage. May she continue to run her triumphant course—our noble mother—sympathizing in silent power with the struggles of ardent and importunate young men who, with a fierce energy, demand admission within her portals.

THE END.

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